

he was not a fan of Court packing during his campaign, but then he backtracked and said he was open to the idea.

Giving in to pressure from the far-left wing of his party, he created this Commission instead, leaving the problem of taking a position on this issue for another more politically convenient day.

As the Commission's report details, Court packing is often used as a political weapon in authoritarian regimes, not in the United States of America.

Take Venezuela, where Hugo Chavez cemented support for his socialist policies by expanding the country's Supreme Tribunal of Justice from 20 members to 32 members back in 2004. Look at all the good that did for what was once the wealthiest country in South America.

We need to leave this practice to dictatorships, where it belongs. Republics, like the United States, simply don't engage in this kind of behavior.

As the Commission's report says, stable democracies "have retained a strong commitment to judicial independence." Packing the Supreme Court would take an ax to that tradition of judicial independence.

The United States is the greatest country on Earth because of our respect for the rule of law, not in spite of it.

And in light of this report, a resolution I cosponsored earlier this year that would fix the number of Supreme Court Justices at nine is even more important, and I would like to thank Florida's senior Senator for leading the way on this.

In the American system of separation of powers and checks and balances, our role here in Congress is to make laws, not to interpret them. That is the job of our courts, and their independence in doing that job is absolutely vital.

As the Commissioners write in their report courts "cannot serve as effective checks on government officials if their personnel can be altered by those same government officials." That is a bipartisan group writing that—a bipartisan group where liberals outnumbered conservatives nearly 6 to 1.

We cannot pack the Supreme Court. President Biden needs to put an end to this dangerous idea once and for all.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

#### CAMPUS FREE SPEECH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, many times my fellow Senators have heard me say that my definition of a university is a place where controversy ought to run rampant. The point of going to college is not for all students to come out thinking exactly the same way. College is for ideas to be challenged. To weed out ideas we disagree with, we need open debate, not to shut down the conversation. Students of all stripes should be able to say what is on their mind.

Institutional free speech should not be partisan. You can have partisan dis-

cussions, but the merely speaking of it, right or wrong, you agree or disagree, should not be a partisan issue or even be a controversial issue. Everyone is hurt if ideas are not frankly discussed by the next generation.

Thankfully, Iowa has recognized this reality. So this spring, Governor Reynolds signed a bill into law that helps codify free expression in Iowa's public colleges.

Now, it sometimes feels like Washington, DC, can forget common sense on this issue as well as a lot of other issues. But in Des Moines, the bill passed both chambers of the Iowa Legislature with just 1 single "no" vote out of 150 senators and representatives.

But here we are nationally. We seem to be heading in the wrong direction in regard to free speech on campus and discussion of some controversial issues. As recent as 2016, majorities of students were confident that the First Amendment was secure, but now it looks like there has been a chilling effect on too many campuses.

According to a more recent poll, 80 percent of the students now say that they self-censor. In other words, 80 percent of the students are afraid to voice and give their support or opposition on certain issues. Hostility to freedom of expression is being heard loud and clear by our students.

But somehow it doesn't seem like the donors seem to be listening to what is happening on these college campuses. I have tried to highlight this overlooked group of donors in the free speech debate. Students and faculty are limited by the threat of getting canceled on campus. But donors have much more sway if they want to take advantage of it.

Now, it seems, unfortunately, these alumnae don't seem to consider free speech when they make a decision to donate, because their donation would have some power behind it if they would take the time to say what they think about how universities ought to be an environment where controversy runs rampant.

We have a poll of donors to one college that found that the vast majority thought that freedom of expression should be a priority on campus, but only 20 percent said it was clear their alma mater protects speech in practice. Now, this is among donors, those who have already given despite their concerns. That is despite donations representing up to 19 percent of college budgets.

There are more examples than I can count of donors withholding contributions and making real concrete change. Donors have stopped speakers from being deplatformed and overrode the veto of the crowd.

It is time to stop pretending that alumni have no say. Earlier this year, I joined the Campus Free Speech Caucus here in the Congress. That caucus tries to preserve this trend. I am also a cosponsor of the Campus Free Speech Resolution, which urges greater First

Amendment protection in America's universities.

But this is not a problem that can be solved by any bill in the Senate. Thankfully, that tide is starting to turn. One of the first colleges to make a move was the University of Chicago. In 2015, the university president sent a statement on free expression to the incoming freshmen. He showed in that letter how both sides of the aisle are hurt when campuses clamp down on open debate. He called out what are considered "trigger warnings" and "safe spaces" while praising academic freedom.

Now other colleges in our country are slowly starting to follow suit. So far, 75 schools have released similar statements, but, of course, 75 schools is only a fraction of all the colleges in the United States.

To continue this progress we need individual Americans to make their voices heard. Ultimately, being a democracy means that we are able to listen to each other and do it civilly. We ought to be able to respectfully talk about where we agree and disagree, not sweep those disagreements under the rug and, in the process, silence those who do have the guts to speak out.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### TRIBUTE TO FRANCIS S. COLLINS

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, Dr. Francis Collins, the Director of the National Institutes of Health, will retire this month after serving as the Director since 2009. That will be 12 years in one of the most challenging jobs in Washington, maybe even in the world.

Dr. Collins served under three Presidents in that job. No other person has served under more than one President. During that 12 years, certainly there had been amazing advances in healthcare.

As a Washington Post reporter put it, and this was a quote from his article, "News that Francis Collins is stepping down as Director of the National Institutes of Health is a bit like hearing that Santa Claus is handing off his reindeer reins." This is the time of year to think about that.

When he announced his retirement earlier this year, it was certainly followed by a flood of comments from the scientific community. They used words like "brilliant," "national treasure," "smartest man in any room," "beloved," and "gentleman." I would also echo those words. I think I would add, from the great opportunities I have had to work with him and spend time with him, "straightforward," "kind," "respected." By the way, he never seems